

# Holey Washington Irving!

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Until I received the June 2004 issue of the *Perfins Bulletin*. I didn't realize that there were other perfins collectors who specialize in perfinned examples in a certain stamp issue. I had assumed that most perfin collectors focus primarily on the patterns of the perfins, and that the stamp design was a secondary concern. However, in the June issue Larry Cohen presented a checklist of the 2 cent Black Hardings with precancels, and later in the same issue, Paul Mistretta compiled an index of articles dealing with perfins on a specific stamp. I don't feel so out of place anymore!

My own perfins 'specialty' is the 1¢ Washington Irving issue (Scott #859). The Irving stamp is part of

the Famous American series of 35 commemorative stamps issued in 1940. My quest for perfinned Washington Irving stamps began as a sideline to my Irving cover collection, which includes FDCs and commercial usages.

The famous American series introduced a new size for stamps – about 1 x 1 1/8 inches; slightly larger than the definitive stamps of the period, but smaller than other commemoratives. They were sold in sheets of 70 stamps rather than the usual 100 stamp (definitives) or 50 stamp (commemorative) sheets. Bob Szymanski offered this as an explanation of why perfinned Famous American stamps are not as plentiful as other stamps from that era; existing

perforators were set up for the ‘standard’ sizes, and companies found it difficult to properly perf the odd-sized Famous American stamps.

In fact, one stamp in my collection is a vertical pair of Irving’s with double perfins, one going in a horizontal direction relative to the image, the other going vertically. Could it be that because of their unusual size, not all of the stamps were perfinned correctly during the first pass, so the sheet was rotated 90 degrees and perfinned again to be sure to hit all of the stamps.

So far I have only found seven perfin patterns on Washington Irving stamps as follows:

L122	S2.7	V1.5
P147	S120	W112
	U82-11	

Two quick notes about the listing. The US Perfins Catalog gives the usage period for U82-11 as 1914-1938. Finding it in the Washington Irving stamp extends that period of use to 1940. And, the V1.5 pattern is the one referred to in the article which is perfinned twice, once horizontally and once vertically.

I’m sure there must be others out there. Can any Club member add to the list? Please write me with any additional information (P.O. Box 766, Patuxent River, MD 20670.)

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